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Soviet Flight Around Moon Expected This Week

By EVERT CLARK
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WASHINGTON, Nov. 19—A Congressional report predicted today that the Soviet Union might send an unmanned passenger ship around the moon and back to earth as early as this week and might be ready to send men on mission by next summer.

Conditions are favorable for launchings to the moon once every 28 days. Those conditions this month will occur on Wednesday and Thursday.

Later unmanned flights may carry dogs or land to bring back a sample of lunar soil, the report indicated.

The study, a comprehensive review of the Soviet space program, also said Russia could conduct enough unmanned, circumlunar test flights to be prepared for manned flights around the moon by next summer. America's Apollo astronauts will just then be beginning to practice in earth orbits for their lunar flights.

Prepared by Librarian

These estimates agree with others from official sources after the recent flurry of Russian space activities. Those flights included the automatic docking on Oct. 30 of two unmanned lunar flight in earth orbit—probably a prerequisite for an unmanned lunar flight.

The report was prepared by Dr. Charles S. Sheldon 2d, acting chief of the science policy research division of the Library of Congress's legislative reference service, for the House Science and Astronautics Committee.

Representative George E.

A Congressional Study Says Manned Shots Could Take Place by Next Summer

Miller, the California Democrat who heads the committee, said the report "suggests certain significant and striking conclusions."

"At the same time that space efforts in the United States appear to be slackening," he said, "the pace of Soviet space flights has picked up by about 60 per cent this year over the corresponding 10 months total of last year."

The report notes that this has been Russia's most active space year and the first since 1957 in which successful Russian launchings exceeded American successes.

Touch of Fiction

The study, based on unclassified data, was reviewed by "more than one institution of government" for accuracy and security. The library said, however, that responsibility for the report "rests with the author and the legislative reference service."

Dr. Sheldon, a senior specialist in space and transportation technology, formerly served with the National Aeronautics and Space Council and the House committee.

Reading at times like a cold war spy novel, the report traces the secrecy-shrouded development of the Soviet program from Sputnik 1, on Oct. 4, 1957, through the launching of Cosmos 190 on Nov. 3.

It finds that often-inconsist-

ent public information policies in both the Soviet Union and the United States frequently hide less of the space story than might be expected.

One footnote to the history of the nuclear age concerns one of several unsuccessful—and unannounced—Russian attempts to send scientific probes toward Mars.

Careful Comparison

"The attempt of Oct. 24, during the Cuban crisis, was especially awkward," the report said. "It broke many pieces, and this cloud of debris came toward Alaska within range of the ballistic missile early warning radar defense, which saw what might for a moment have looked like a mass ICBM attack. The computer must have quickly revealed it was not, but the potentialities for misunderstanding were there."

This Soviet failure and a number of others later were disclosed by official American sources.

But the report serves as a reminder of Soviet successes as well as failures. By comparing Russian and American achievements carefully, it discloses that the United States took seven years to match the weight of Sputnik 2 in orbit and six years each to match the feats of the Sputnik 3 scientific satellite, the first landing of an object on the moon and the first photography of the moon's far side.

Often, the American spacecraft finally outperformed the first Russian achievements, but in some cases Russia had moved ahead and did not relinquish its lead.